



**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT
APRIL 14, 2016**

The Special meeting of the Common Council of the City of Middletown was held in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building on Thursday, April 14, 2016 at 7 p.m.

Present

Mayor Daniel T. Drew; Deputy Mayor Robert P. Santangelo, Councilman Eugene Nocera, Councilwoman Mary A. Bartolotta, Councilman Gerald E. Daley, Councilman Carl R. Chisem, Councilman Robert Blanchard, Councilman Grady L. Faulkner, Jr., Councilman Sebastian N. Giuliano, Councilwoman Deborah Kleckowski, Councilwoman Linda Salafia; Corporation Counsel Daniel B. Ryan; and Common Council Clerk Marie O. Norwood.

Absent

Councilman Thomas J. Serra and Councilman Philip J. Pessina

Also Present

One hundred members of the public

1. Mayor calls meeting to order.

The Deputy Mayor calls the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and leads the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Pledge of Allegiance)

The Call of the meeting is read; the Acting Chair declares the call a legal call and the meeting a legal meeting.

(Council Clerk Reads the Call of the Meeting and Mayor declares call a legal call and meeting a legal meeting.)

The Chair thanks everyone for being here and it is a difficult time in CT and a lot of tough choices to make and it is important to have public input and appreciates you coming here. He gives a brief account at the State level. The state has a \$1 billion deficit in next year's budget; heard on the news the State closed the \$200 million deficit and the next one the governor and general assembly passed legislation to reduce how much we will receive from the State, like the taxing of cars. The governor cut the City by a little less than \$1 million. Last week the finance committee proposed to cut us another \$1 million and the governor this week released a new proposed budget by cutting us further by \$1.5 million. Whose cut will win out, we don't know, but it is about \$1 million. It is not good news. The State reduced our aid since his budget two weeks ago and it is a hole we need to make up. Roughly speaking, the aid comprises 20% of the revenue we receive for city services. Some, like the school and police come out of the general fund and some come out of other funds like water and sewer. We have to fill the hole somehow. In the middle of the night at the last session, the implementer bill, very often things get snuck into that package that have an effect on towns in the city and in that bill a spending cap was added and passed without public hearing and seeing the light of day. That means that our state aid can be cut 50 Cents by every dollar we spend over that cap. If we don't control our costs we will run out of room to grow. There are special exceptions for special education and borrowing. The remaining money after the 2.5% if you go over, the state will cut the aid the city receives by 50 cents on the dollar for every dollar you go over and it incentivizes borrowing money. There is a bill on the floor that would reduce the interest rate on delinquent tax debt from 18% to 8% and that might sound great, but the problem is that becomes a revenue stream that offsets the taxes you pay to fund the vital services and if it goes down, people paying taxes on time will subsidize people who don't and will cause the mill rate to go up and we can't go over the 2.5%. I understand it is a difficult time and that you care for all the services provided and for the teachers and parents this is a difficult time and we are working with the Board and Superintendent to navigate the waters and the picture is changing by the day on the State level. The general assembly is only 1/2 way through to balance the budget for next year and it doesn't solve the problem of the year after that. It is grim and real in a way that recent state deficits have not been. We have to make sure we don't do the things the state did to get where they are today. If you would like to share opinions and thoughts on a one on one basis, I will make an appointment and carve out the time to do that. He gives the office number and email address. Make an appointment and come in and I will speak with you and what we are doing to respond.

2. Public Hearing Opens

The chair opens the public hearing on agenda items at 7:11 p.m.

William Prevatte lives at Rose Circle speaks to the issue Police Officer Brian Moore who died in the line of duty and raise awareness of what the police officers do every day and don't get recognition for. He discusses that he was protecting the citizens of New York. He is proud to support the sworn officers of the NYC Police Department. We as a society don't know what they do every day. To Commander of the NYC Police Department, he reads a letter to him regarding Brian Moore and the Police Officers and what they do every day. He will advocate for the family of the police officers will not be forgotten.

Mike Rogalsky the 2016 Commander for council of Veterans; he presented a letter to the members of the Council concerning Veteran's Park. They have a meeting coming up and he is being questioned about the status of the letter he sent. . He wonders if they can get an update in writing for his commanders. Deputy Mayor Santangelo states he spoke at the Council. He was told the meeting was the last Tuesday of the month was the meeting and it is the third. He will be at the next meeting. The Chair states the Deputy Mayor will be handling it.

Noted for the record

Councilwoman Bartolotta takes her seat in the chamber at 7:17 p.m.

Trevor Charles speaks to the wish the Council will put their greatest effort to fund the education budget. He grew up in Middletown and came back to graduate school at Wesleyan and came back to work and become part of the program that well prepared him. He has taught for 12 year at MHS. In our tough times, tough decisions have to be made and credit to the Mayor for AAA but those well managed policies is indicative that Middletown is in as stable condition to reach out and provide for the city in the education budget. If we want education to improve, we need to fund it. He has friends who are thinking about moving to town and they are checking the educational system and not the bond rating. He is more worried about who we are being compared to for education and it is the bottom of the list. We need to step up our support for education and fund it fully or as close as we can.

Jackie Pollack states underfunding the Board of Education is not good. Education should not be cut. Our students are who people come to see as well as the band and drama club and the unified theatre. We have the crew team drawing people to the riverfront. We also keep small businesses thriving, friends and families at the movies, skating, YMCA and restaurants. Underfunding the Board of Education, you are forcing them to make cuts including 17 teachers. The Board of Education has had to make many cuts in the past and is finding it hard to find funds for the program. The youth in Middletown deserve funding and what you propose is not enough

Katherine Marks, Shady Hill Lane understands the State is having difficult times and she thinks cuts should not be in education. The layoffs are for the elementary level. They will get to the middle school and be unprepared and lose their drive and is that what you want to happen. Children don't just lean in the classroom; cutting athletics which teaches youth about commitment, leadership, time management not only on the field but in the classroom. By cutting athletics you are telling the children you don't care about them.

Katherine Roberts Scarborough Lane begs the Council to relook at the budget. They have had a wonderful experience, but there is nothing extra in the school. She doesn't see anything that can be cut. Her second grader has 23 kids and kindergarten was 16 and first grade was 23 but there was an interventionist as well as the teacher. She is disappointed with the pace of learning and two teachers were notified of nonrenewal and she is devastated and is afraid of what it will look like next year. With two teachers told not to return knowing the budget will only support 2 teachers. I assure you today that 26 kids in a first grade class is completely unacceptable. The range of abilities and kids coming into our space are not the same as in the past. Kids come in with problems and how is one teacher going to be successful with that. A family of 4 is trying to make it on \$44,000 a year. The needs of kids are getting greater. She is reaching out to you to help us with the money to education and volunteer at the large classes, the playground or at lunch. Middletown don't let us down and they want to know we have your support.

Emma Haskell 4th grade student doesn't think it is fair you take away teachers from my school think about your own kids. Please find us the money to keep our teachers. Our students depend on it.

Brian Haskell is going to try not to throw a tantrum. He has four main points

Noted for the Record

Councilman Daley takes his seat in the chamber at 7:28 p.m.

He brings up the historical significance of proposed and past budgets. The council has dedicated about 50% to go to the schools and whether it includes debt service is a question. If we go with history, funding would be \$2 million. The charter states no citizens can vote to approve the budget, but we did vote for you, the Council and when you have a room full of people asking you to support the budget, they are telling you what they want and it would be a disappointment to look everyone in the eye and say you don't care. Mayor Drew brought up a good point; it is a tough time in Connecticut. But you have made point that Middletown is strong and has a strong economy. When you proposed \$700,000 and everyone says this is ridiculous and when the state comes down and says we are cutting \$1 million are you working with the governor and are you fighting to change that. I don't see anyone going to fight this. If we can do it why can't the elected officials. In all actuality the Mayor's proposal is just a proposal. The Council has the opportunity to stand up and your actions will speak louder than words.

Ginny Gallitto states her child's teachers have been fantastic and he was in a class of 19; this year he is one of 16 kids in a class and his teachers are here tonight. Please fund your schools. This is the future of our community.

Sean King wanted to follow up on things Brian said. This room is filled with parents who send their kids to school every day. They have trust in the schools and administrators that they will take care of our kids. That builds trust in the people who are part of the school system. It is not easy to build the trust, but they have. When a budget proposal comes out that proposes salary increases in excess of 20% and yet requires a reduction of teaching staff, it has been suggested that teachers do not have to be laid off, but my trust is in the administrators and we trust the elected Board of Education members to make the right decisions and when they say and decide the proposed budget means laying off 15 teachers, we trust that decision. The people here are skeptical about the notion that other city staff remain in their jobs and get raises while these poor teachers have to move on and class size has to grow and other programs will be cut. My point is your charge as a Council in coming up with a budget, you have to come up with something to instill trust that you are doing what is best for our kids. State government and the money that comes in to the State, it is a problem and puts the council in a bind to make tough decisions when the ECS is only funded at 60% of the calculation or Middletown while other towns get in excess of 100%. We understand that is a problem and that needs to be addressed by the State and we need to reach out to our legislators. They are your reps and you need to reach out to them and this is the problem they are causing and what they are doing by not funding the ECS grant.

Steve Smith, College Street states a couple of days ago he sat with Councilman Daley at the Board of Education meeting when they asked for parent input where to cut the budget. My opening comment was where they could cut on the city side. He appreciated the comments from Councilman Daley and the Mayor about the tough time from the State. All data comes from CCM 2015 salary survey. It breaks down city salaries by population. Middletown is the 5th largest in the population range; he reads about 22 individual positions broken down and of the 22, Middletown has the 5th largest and is ranked in the top 3% for 18 individuals as the highest or second highest position listed. He lists the positions and has an issue with extraordinary salary increases for them when teachers are being laid off. Education got .89% and city had 2.3%. He starts with the legal department and states it has the highest legal attorney salaries and it is 80% above the average. Middletown is number one for Mayor and legislative department. There is a 25% raise for his chief of staff and is equal to 94% of what the Mayor makes. Water and Sewer, Economic Development and Planning Office, Middletown ranks 52% above and is number 1; Town Clerk and IT, Middletown reported the highest salary and it is 27% above average. The salary for the Director of the Russell Library which just had a raise and the average was \$78,000 - \$99,000 and is now \$20,000 above the next highest town with 5,000 fewer people. If you take those salaries increases and the tax abatement, it is over \$100,000.

Kathy Adams, Bellevue Place, teacher at MHS and she is very proud to teach at MHS and they sent all four children to public schools and she is proud and could not be prouder to live in Middletown and all four of her children are successful. She tells the Council about her children. It is not anything she did by herself; however having gone through the public schools she is proud to teach and hopes all kids get what her kids did. In school today, they were using their textbooks in history class and one student asked if she could have another book and it was ripped; the cover half torn off and pages brown and torn and I gave her another one. They wondered how old the book was and we had a great lesson on finding the copyright date and the book was published in 2003 and I asked her what year she was born and it was 2000. The text books in her class in three years will be older than her students. They have asked for new books. She doesn't blame the Superintendent or the Council, but school is not the same as what it used to be. History has changed just like science. We don't teach the same way and if we did we would not need school reform. It has changed and with it has come all sorts of new things that cost money and cause disruption and change. We don't like it and I know you don't like this budget, but behind me all these people if I ask them to raise their hands if they want to see the school budget fully funded. All raise their hands and clap in support of it.

Jaime Latino, 454 High street states she feels strongly that the Board of Education budget should be fully funded and her taxes go up due to inflation and ask the elected officials to do due diligence. She went to a forum about cuts to the budget and asks the Council to put forth the same efforts to trim the fat from the proposed budget. How can you increase salary for staff when considered cutting teaching staff and athletics. The cuts should be to city staff wages as well. Families move in out of town based on the quality of schools. Poor qualities of school decrease property values and his cohort of 65% single people with no children noted in the last census, the Mayor spoke of our AAA rating which had no bearing or reflection on the decrease of property values or decrease in student achievement. She asks for fair funding

Sophia Ingles at Bielefield states the teachers are good and their positions should not be cut. Riley Chapman doesn't think the town should cut 17 teachers. Selena Chapman wanted to talk to ask why I should stay here. I love Bielefield ; we are why Sophia is here. Mayor Drew said it was disparate times and when she looks at the budget she sees raises and teachers are not getting raises. She has a problem with huge raises for staff and why are you asking the Board of Education to cut staff to make class size bigger and the town is getting raises. \$700,000 is a salary for a year, not in this town, and to run all the schools on a small stipend is ridiculous. If you cut air conditioning, her kids could have their teacher back. If you cut that we may have teachers since our schools are not air conditioned. If you are going to get a raise and the staff is, then the town needs to fork over for the schools.

A resident states as a parent she is appalled and upset the raises are well above where they should be and you should have a pay cut and give to the teachers to fund what they do in the classroom. If you cut teachers and increase class size, what are you doing with kids with learning disabilities and

behavior issues because one teacher can't handle it. I have seen it as a substitute. Increasing class size and decreasing teachers will not help. You can't cut the resources.

Colleen Brown, a teacher since 2001, had worked at Kiegwin and WWMS; she has been a resident since 1977. Happy story is she has had the opportunity to teach in Hartford, Meriden and Stonington and the happiest she has been is Middletown. She has grown because of the support of her colleagues and from her students and it is her hope that she can give back to them. The sad story is prior to working Middletown from Stonington and when she went to get her recommendation and a top administrator said you are leaving to teach in Middletown, you will be sorry. Since then, she has worked to embrace the community as a teacher and it has been the best experience. The city is incredible and one of its greatest assets is its school system. No one would buy or drive a car with two tires and no steering wheel and an accelerator; it is up to you to make our cars drive better, our school system drive better. I live in a fantastic neighborhood; three friends with young people from her street put for sale signs in their yard and they are leaving to go to better schools. We have to work together and you have a strong team and we can't lose any more students to magnets. With budget cuts, we risk going to a state of mediocrity.

MS Leary states her youngest goes to Snow and the oldest goes to a magnet school. She supports the youth in Middletown. She sent her son to a magnet school and she is thinking about taking him out and sending him to Woodrow Wilson Middle School. She looks at her basketball team and if they don't have teachers and nothing to do, they may go to lead a life of crime and she thinks how that could help keep the teachers. You are taking away from kids to learn and be able to sit in your seat in the future. We came out to support the budget. There are parents scared to come and speak to you and I am not scared.

Meg Souci states our children deserve better than what the Mayor proposed. She watched students speak about lacrosse and teachers crying about the loss of teachers. She watched social media and disagrees this is a ploy of the Board of Education and administration. Class size is a problem already in the schools. She is an advocate of small class size and it is not a singular issue that has impacted many schools. Dr. Charles found some money for additional teachers. The effect of cutting 17 is unfathomable. It will have an impact on kids based on research. She heard the teachers who would be cut and cringed. By cutting the budget below what was proposed, we will lose talented teachers. Mayor Drew referred to Dr. Charles' budget as a wish list and she doesn't believe the budget provides for anything but the basics. In 2016, technology is as necessary as textbooks. When you brag about the jobs, are you forgetting they need to understand technology. The budget will cut extracurricular activities, but they are needed. The activities after school will keep some students in school for the education. Being part of extracurricular activities will help a student's wellbeing. If you pass a budget slashing services this year, it will be a hole that will be hard to dig out of next year. You could pass the Mayor's budget and the Board of Education will have to make hard decisions, but you could change the budget and not force Dr. Charles to make the cuts. Under 20% of high schoolers don't feel important to the town. Please use your vote and show Middletown students are important to you.

Lindsay Dahlmer, Arbutus has twins in a class at Wesley and they have lost some kids in their class. She grew up in a small town in Vermont and never saw big city politics but is watching since 2008; up until this year, they put their house on the market and to leave a town they have come to love and have teachers dealing with classes so large and Mayor your son is in the class and it is mostly boys and Mrs. Anderson tries to give one on one and she can't do it and it is not fair and it is not fair that those classes will lose one of the two teachers. We are leaving because one of our children is having a hard time. If we don't fund our schools and help our teachers, you will see home values decline and young families won't come to this town. I am asking the Council to help my friends and prove my family wrong and make Middletown shine. My family can't take that risk any more.

Annemarie Cannatta McKeon thanks everyone for listening; she is the executive director of Northend Arts Rising and the arts are healthy and as you know arts is an economic driver for our city. They came because Middletown is a great place to come to and it is because of you and the people in Middletown. I hope you think about investing our money for the good of all because the arts and education help people to be the best they can be and when we are the best, that is how we are the best community. The arts helped raise people up to be the best they can be, just like education. When you are deciding what to do, you need to invest in all of us through the arts and education. Thank you for supporting the arts and support education.

Ed McKeon thanks the Council members who came to the budget meeting the other night to look at our struggle. On Tuesday, the Assistant Superintendent said if there are cuts we are going to lose ground and it will be catastrophic and you will see an academic shift. The sky might not be falling, but the value of my house is and it is directly connected to the schools. There is a sense that a death cycle happens when you stop paying attention to the schools and stop paying taxes and less money and less taxes. He uses Detroit as an example. The sky might not be falling, but pieces of the ceiling in the gym or hallways in schools are. Graduation rates might fall and maybe teachers decide that they may go to someplace with less struggles. He worries that administrators will go. He thinks Pat Charles is not a good enough politician. She doesn't get mad enough. She comes in with a list of problems and she is told every year she is wrong. The sky may not be falling, but the number of qualified teachers will. These are teachers doing a great job and it is the worse to go to the best and brightest that they are not needed. The sky hasn't fallen yet because of our dedicated staff. We have summer school at Macdonough and the teachers there do it on a voluntary basis. I am not sure if the guys who plow or fill pot holes would do that. We talked about what happens with the state and they

don't do what they should be doing; we don't take the responsibility to say if no one else will do it, then we will do it. If we have to pay more in taxes, then we have to do it and if we look at both sides of the budget and make cuts, then we have to do it.

Rebecca Sutay, Stephanie Albino, and Aimee Adamo, Bielefield; they are three teachers directly affected by the budget. I have worked for Middletown for 4 years in a variety of capacities. For the last two years, she has taught 4th grade. I have been fortunate that she has worked with students, families and colleagues that help her grow as an educator. Bielefield was one out of 36 schools on the state focus list and recently out of 15, Bielefield is off that list. We believe due to the collaboration, small class size and afterschool activities we made it happen. We ask that you support the education budget. Stephanie Albino this is her first year and she has personally seen the impact of small class size and the one on one time helps them to succeed. It was taken off the focus list because of the hard work of staff and because of the positive impact of small class size on the scores. The students are affected by the lack of money and deserve class size where they do not get lost in the shuffle and deserve a quality education and without the money, it is taken away. Rebecca Sutay states this is her first year as a teacher, but she worked in other capacities. She has 14 smart and beautiful students and they have made strides. They have had success because of the small size; she has seen them below grade level and seen them exceed their grade level. If the teachers are cut, class size will grow. We love our students and it will hinder them and the teachers left behind. Bielefield is off the focus list; why take away the teachers that have gotten us there. As a first year teacher she has spent \$3,000 of her own dollars. I love my job and would hate to leave but I may have to. Please support the education budget.

Janice Pollack MFT addresses the underfunding of the schools. Underfunding will cause us to lose educational grounds. We are fighting to compete with Magnet schools that offer smaller class size. The community is a special place and you have to speak Middletown. We are about to lose 15 of them. They arrive early and stay late and encourage children and guide them to behave better. Laying off teachers and having larger class sizes will make a difference in the future. Years ago teachers taught from textbooks; that is not the case anymore. We need to differentiate students and some need a restrictive environment and we forced to use technology that was not in use 5 years ago. We need you to fund education.

Carla Petruzzi, Bielefield teacher states we are the Bielefield Bobcats and we are no longer a focus school and we did what it took to turn our school around. See what we do and what we are talking about.

Charlotte McCoid states the MFT reminds you in the 1990's the health care crisis, MFT hired two national consultants in health care and were charged to find health insurance and they did and saved money and did it for fire and police and they piggybacked to the advantage of the workers in Middletown. The Mayor's budget is underfunded by \$1 million in health care costs and she asks what kind of partnership this is. We need to work as a team and the MFT is here to do that and I am sure Middletown is as well.

Cheryl McClellan, Board of Education member, states you have heard from our parents and teachers and you have heard their perspective. We hired Pat Charles 4 years ago to close the achievement gap, give them a better education and do the best we can. Our staff does a wonderful job and they have a good leader and they try to make sure everything we give the kids is what they need. A teacher teaches as if they were 3 people. To cut us down to \$700,000 leaving \$900,000 in a hole even after cuts to 0% - everything we have done will go away. Help us figure this out. If we don't have kids in the system, they have been through the system. Please reconsider.

Marilyn Dunkley Board of Education member states she has children in the public schools and I am not going to give you statistics. YMCA preschool 20 kids in the class and a 4 year old is throwing a chair; 4 to 5 will go to kindergarten next year but they are not ready for kindergarten. I sit on the expulsion hearing and all those kids live in the same neighborhood or like neighborhood and they might have been the kids throwing the chair. I support Pat's first budget. When you cut the budget you are telling our children the future. If you were telling me 20 years ago I would be standing here, I wouldn't believe I would be on the Board. Look what our kids could be. You can be where I am now and if you cut the budget it will not be the same thing. You need to fully fund the budget.

Jennifer Jusenski, MHS teacher states thinking about teaching brings tears to her eyes. She is so happy to be here and teaching in the school system. The programs offered at MHS, she is impressed with the staff and they are so smart and dedicated and happy to come to work. I have been to athletic events and plays and a number of staff that supports the events is amazing and she hates to see the budget cut and staff becoming miserable. The moral makes a difference to education.

A resident at 156 Grand Street has been listening to the numbers and the facts, city budget versus Board of Education. It is embarrassing that the city is giving increases and teachers are getting decreases. I had plans to move out of the north end but I love the schools and the teachers and she has volunteered for four years to do summer school and to hear they come to the school without air condition is unbelievable. So we are now going to have bigger class size and less materials. She would like the budget fully funded.

Carla Manaila(?) states everything has been said already, but the one thing that sticks in her brain is to fully fund Pat's budget. It is not where it should be. The students and teachers do not have the resources they need daily. We don't have what we need and we have struggled for years. By the end of April, at Moody, they had to bring in their own paper and there are families that can't supply paper. Her students come home with field trip to the Bronx Zoo but the cost is \$40 and the PTO would fund it but they are raising funds to buy computers to take standardized tests. The PTO is supplying a lot of technology instead of the money going to the students to fund field trips. Fund what Pat needs. There isn't anything to cut. If we can only increase the spending by 2.5%, she needs it now and we need teachers and supplies; kids don't need to bring in their own paper. This should come from you.

David Schultz, Ridge Road, wants the Council to act more intelligently than the State government and they found \$1.5 million to give to Bob to train people to sell a couch.

Camille Svent has two students in the system. She is a substitute teacher and sees what they have to deal in the classroom, the behavior and oversize and cutting the budget is not a great idea. Teachers don't get paid for the extra hours they spend at these meetings and they do it for the love of their job and the students. We need our teachers to help our students to get a better education and help them by not cutting the Board of Education budget. Help us help them by funding Dr. Charles budget.

Steve McKeever teacher at WWMS and past president of MFT states you remember how bad it was and we had an administration that was bad; we brought Pat in and gave her an impossible task and we are still digging out from under. I left and worked for AFT for a couple of years; I am walking into a school with Governor Malloy and Commissioner Prior and there were 30 kids in the classroom. He asked the Com. Prior why there were two students sitting on the desk and he couldn't respond. I said it is because the room has four corners and she has six trouble kids and put two on desks. We are not so bad we have to put kids on the desk but we are headed that way and we are not as good as a computer in everyone's hands but are moving that way. She is turning things around, but the budget has to be funded.

Sheila Daniels states she has been on the Board of Education for ten years and it saddens her to be here. Your job is even harder than mine and she thanks them for their time and thanks the teachers, parents, administration and students for being here. Since the asset building program in 2008 the one fact that stuck with us is that 19% of the students thought they were valued and the second time the survey was taken, it was only 17% who thought so. I take pride in Middletown and love the city and the fact we raised our daughters here. When the lacrosse students came to us on Tuesday, I wanted to cry. We should be proud of them and the coaches who have taught them. The team is a reflection of our community and it is an opportunity and we might not be able to. We all have responsibilities it is our money and owe it to each other to work together and I implore everyone to work together to make the community better so that the next time the survey is done, the number is well above 17 – 19%.

Chris Drake, Board of Education member, was reminded recently about the acrimony between the Board and City Hall and hopes to strike a different tone and that we act more collaboratively than before. I have more access with you because I ran with you at the last election and talk with you regularly. On Monday, Dr. Charles presents the difference between our budget and the Mayor's and there has been some exaggeration about the differences. What I believe is the difference between the budget is 17 teachers 10 custodians 1 school nurse, 1 school secretary and more; I firmly believe it and it is not an exaggeration. He reads numbers from 2013, home sale price \$215,000; 2014, it was \$197,000 and last year \$187,000. When you are on your way home think about what you think your home is worth and then go to Zillow and look it up; it will be less than you think. We bought our home for \$235,000 in 2014 and Zillow told him today it is worth \$159,000. When you go on Zillow, one of the first things you see is a rating of the school system and not the bond rating. In 2017, you will reassess the value of homes and if you want the values to go up you will have to invest heavily in the schools. One of the reasons his home is worth so little is because the people next door sold and moved to Glastonbury and sold their house at a cut rate and that is happening in a number of places in the city. Education should be an investment and if you want the grand list to go up we have to invest in education.

Pat Charles, Superintendent of Schools thanks everyone who spoke and to the Council. We know you have an impossible task and Mayor Drew has explained it to me and I have spoken to the legislators and when you have a terrible situation it brings out the passion in people and what you heard tonight is that passion. I could have stayed in Westbrook but I moved to Middletown because I want to be here and it is where his kids went to school and where her grandkids will go to school and she wants it to be the best it will be. It will take a lot of work and comments are going back and forth and probably not the most productive way to move forward. No one will work harder for you, but the kids in Middletown are most important for Middletown's future. I know not one of you wants to give us \$700,000 and I am asking you to reevaluate. There is a way we can do this and the first year I asked for 12%. I always tell you what we need. We can't do it for \$700,000; please reconsider.

Enza Macri Assistant Superintendent of Schools states she chose to move here and used to teach in North Haven where classes were small; she wanted to be in a district where she would make an impact. Everything our teachers do, you can't understand it unless you go into the classroom. I called North Haven and told them you have it made because we are a diverse community and urban areas link incarceration to 3rd grade reading level. Our students deserve a good education and those

at risk deserve it. We feed 1/3 of our population. She was principal at Lawrence in 2005 and got off the failing list. We can't do more to be more transparent and she can't be more honored to work with Dr. Charles. We know what we are doing with the money; help us keep them off the failing school list and provide the funding.

Vincent Loffredo Board of Education chair states with wonderful people here today who spoke out and we went through it line by line it. We would have liked to add more and we had the opportunity with the Mayor's office to take extra time to go through the budget in a detailed manner. He thanks everyone for joining with us and we will back on Monday to answer your questions. We ask you for support for the budget proposed by Dr. Charles.

3. Public Hearing Closes

The chair, seeing no members of the public wishing to address the Council, closes the public hearing at 9:03 p.m.

The Chair states before we adjourn, he thanks everyone for attending and sharing your passion and making it better in every way. He explains department raises and what is seen as excessive salary increases and when you go through the budget, when we settle our contracts we save the money for what we know the increases are and it is put aside from previous budget years and dispersed in later years and contains increases from previous years; some is debt service like Mattabassett. The second point there were some questions about the city side in the proposed budget; we cut staff from the tax assessor, police officers, substitute librarians and crossing guards. If you have questions call my office to speak by telephone or make an appointment.

6. Meeting adjourned.

Councilwoman Kleckowski moves to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Santangelo seconds the motion. The chair calls for the vote. It is 10 aye votes and 2 absent by Council Members Serra and Pessina. The Chair declares the meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

ATTEST:

MARIE O. NORWOOD
COMMON COUNCIL CLERK